COLCHESTER

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER HANDBOOK

Adopted _____

We Create Innovative Thinkers for a Dynamic World

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Preamble

The members of the Colchester Board of Education (the Board) understand that access to a quality public education is a Constitutional requirement and a moral imperative to ensure that all students have an opportunity to fully develop their talents as they learn and grow together. Accordingly, all Colchester students are entitled to a quality education that prepares them to be lifelong learners. In order to provide the necessary and appropriate leadership for the Colchester Public Schools, the Board, both collectively and individually, will commit to governing as a professional board of directors. The Board will commit to the principles and practices of professional governance, understand and abide by the adopted Board policies, practices, procedures and principles, focus on continuous improvement, and model effective moral leadership for students, staff and the community. This handbook is an extension of the Board bylaws, and outlines the procedures and practices of the Board that will be used to ensure operational effectiveness in service of students, staff, and the community.

Mission

The mission of Colchester Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is to create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world.

Board Goals

The Colchester Board of Education goals for all students and the district are:

1. All of our students annually meet high academic standards for growth.
2. The climate and culture in our schools support student acceptance, connectedness, and readiness to learn.
3. The District is operationally efficient and effective.

Board Governance

The Colchester Board of Education will institutionalize a focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

Guiding Principles

The Board will:

1. Deliberate in many voices, but govern in one.
2. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility; understanding that it is the Board, not the staff or administration, which is responsible for excellence in governance.
3. Strive to lead the district through a clear mission statement, shared and commonly understood goals, broad and clearly written policies, and a continual monitoring of the school and student performance.
4. Be willing to hold itself to high standards of excellence in governance and professional responsibility, including a willingness to hold individual Board members and the Board itself accountable for its actions.
5. Continually monitor its own process, performance, and progress.
6. Advocate for the school district and its students on the local, state, and national level.
7. Commit, both individually and collectively, to being well-informed and educated on local, state and national educational issues, initiatives and practices.
8. Regularly communicate with all stakeholders about school district performance, direction, initiatives, issues, and ideas.
9. Formally and informally recognize and celebrate school, staff, and student success.
10. Insist on the pursuit of excellence on the part of all with a role in the school district – staff, students, and board members.
11. Always strive to act in the interest of what is best for all students, believing that all students can learn and succeed at a high level.
12. Serve as a model of positive, professional, and ethical conduct.

Bylaws of the Board

Role of the Board and member (Powers, Purposes, Duties)

The Board of Education is the governing body of the school district and derives its power and exists under the constitution and General Statutes of the State of Connecticut and the procedures of the Connecticut State Board of Education.

Limits of Authority

The Board of Education is the unit of authority. Apart from their function as part of the unit, Board members have no individual authority. Individually the Board member may not commit the district to any policy, act, or expenditure. The Board member is prohibited from doing business with the school district and from having an interest in any contract with the school district in general. The Board member does not represent a factional segment of the community but is rather a part of the body which represents and acts for the community as whole.

No individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools, nor as an individual command the services of any school employee.

Legal Responsibilities of the Board

The Board of Education shall have authority to take all action necessary or advisable to meet its responsibilities under state statute and Town Charter including but not limited to the following:

1. To annually establish, with the Superintendent of Schools, educational priorities for the school district.
2. Create, abolish, modify and maintain such positions, schools, divisions and classifications as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the educational enterprise.
3. To elect a Superintendent of Schools in accordance with state statutes.
4. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
5. To determine the number, classification, duties and remuneration of employees.
6. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with state statutes.
7. To provide for the appraisal of the performance of personnel.

8. To initiate and approve the acquisition and disposition of school sites and to initiate and approve plans for school buildings.
9. To consider any specific recommendations made by the Superintendent of Schools.
10. To keep the citizenry informed of purposes, values, conditions and needs of public education in the Town.
11. To consider, revise and adopt any changes in the curriculum.
12. To take any other actions required or permitted by law.
13. To make reasonable provision to implement the educational interests of the State, as defined by law, so that
    a. each child shall have for the period prescribed in the General Statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
    b. the school district shall finance at a reasonable level an educational program designed to achieve this end;
    c. the school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds;
    d. the mandates in the General Statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education shall be implemented.
14. To maintain a safe school setting and shall, in accordance with the statutes, maintain records of allegations, investigations, and reports that a child has been abused or neglected by a school employee, as defined in C.G.S. 53a-65)

Public Statements

The Chair of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools shall be the only authorized spokespeople for the Board of Education.

No other member of the Board of Education shall issue statements, news releases, or other information purporting to represent the views of the Board of Education without clearance from the Chair.

Communication will be a concurrent responsibility of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools will work with the members of the Board of Education to conduct an active and comprehensive program throughout the school district and community for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all Board meetings.

Organization

The Board of Education shall conduct its organizational meeting at its first meeting following Board elections. Such meeting shall be conducted in accordance with Policy 9321: Time, Place, Notification of Meetings.

Number of Members, Term of Office, Oath of Office

The Board of Education shall consist of seven members. Each term of office shall be for four years.

Members shall take office on the second Monday following the date of the election. Before entering upon their official duties, members of the Board of Education shall take an oath of office before the town clerk or his/her designee.

Officers and Auxiliary Personnel

1. The Board shall, not later than one month after the date on which newly elected members take office, elect from its own members a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.
2. Officers shall hold their respective offices for two years, and until their successors are duly elected.
3. Should a vacancy arise in an office of the Board during the term of a Board officer's service, the members of the Board (including, if applicable, the member vacating a Board office) shall elect a successor to fill the office until the next regular election for Board officers.
4. The votes of each member cast in such election shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours, excluding Saturday, Sunday, or legal holidays, and shall also be recorded in the minutes of such meeting at which taken, which minutes shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times.

Chair

The Chair shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Board of Education, and perform all duties imposed by Connecticut General Statute 10-218 and those prescribed by policies, rules and regulations.

2. Call special meetings as deemed necessary or upon receiving a written request by one-third of the members of the Board.
3. Appoint members to the committees as provided for in these bylaws of the Board of Education. (cf. 9130, 9132, 9133 - re committees)
4. Approve agenda as prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
5. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
6. Keep the Vice-Chair duly informed on all pertinent matters in case of the absence of the Chair.
7. Act as a resource to the Superintendent on decisions which may require further input between Board meetings.
8. Perform other responsibilities as directed by the Board of Education or imposed by state statutes.

The Chair's right to vote at board meetings shall not be affected by his/her duties as presiding officer. The Chair's signature shall be an alternate signature on all legal documents requiring the signature of the secretary.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair of the Board of Education shall serve in the absence of the Chair, and in the performance of this service shall exercise all powers of the Chair.

The Vice-Chair cannot fill vacancies required to be filled by the Chair and does not serve as an ex-officio member of committees. The Vice-Chair will work with the Chair and Superintendent to become generally informed of Board business. In the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair will act as a resource to the Superintendent on decisions which may require input between Board meetings.

Secretary of the Board

A member of the Colchester Board of Education shall be elected Secretary and shall perform the duties assigned by law and the Board.

The Secretary of the Board of Education shall:

1. Perform the duties of the Chairperson at Board meetings in the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

2. With prior approval from the Board Chair and Superintendent, attend to the official correspondence of the Board including 1) managing, and responding to relevant communications addressed to the board; 2) assisting in drafting board statements; and 3) maintaining accurate records of correspondence for posting during public meetings as "communications."
3. Act as signatory for the Board of Education on official documents.

The Board of Education may prescribe additional duties for the Secretary.

Attorney

The attorney of the Colchester Board of Education shall be the legal advisor of the Board and its officers in questions related to their official duties. The Board of Education may appoint, either on a full-time or retainer basis, an attorney or attorneys to serve as its school attorney. The primary function of the attorney is to provide professional legal counsel and representation for the Board and Superintendent.

The attorney shall:

1. Represent the Board of Education in legal proceedings.
2. Give his/her written opinion on all legal questions referred to him/her by the Board of Education or the Superintendent.
3. Attend Board of Education meetings, conferences and other meetings as requested by the Board, Superintendent, Board Chairperson or Board committee.
4. Fulfill such other legal duties as the Board of Education may assign.

The performance of the school attorney(s) shall be subject to evaluation by the Board of Education and the Superintendent.

Treasurer

The town treasurer serves as treasurer of the Board of Education. The town treasurer shall:

1. Sign all warrants drawn in settlement of obligations ordered by the Board.
2. Perform all duties imposed by the statutes.

Auditor

The auditor shall conduct an annual audit examination in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The audit shall include all funds over which the Board of Education has control.

The auditor shall also perform such other related services as may be required by the Board of Education.

Committees

Members of the Board of Education may indicate their first, second, and third choices of committee assignments. After discussion, appointments will be made by the Board Chair at the next regular meeting.

Committees appointed by the Board shall advise the Board of Education but cannot determine policy.

The Board Chair shall be an ex-officio member of each committee.

Standing Committees

The Chair of the Board of Education may, with the approval of the majority vote of the Board, create standing committees as deemed necessary. Committee members shall select their own chair and secretary.

As deemed necessary, the Board of Education may establish standing committees from among its membership to make recommendations for Board action. The following rules will govern the appointment and function of such committees which shall:

1. Be established through action of the Board of Education;
2. Have their members appointed by the Board Chair;
3. Be informed in writing at the time of committee formation of committee purpose, functions, and duties;
4. Make recommendations for Board action, but it may not act for the Board except in those instances where authority to act has been specifically delegated to the committee by the Board;
5. Can be dissolved at any time by a vote of the Board.

The Board Chair shall be ex-officio members of all standing committees.

The standing committees and their primary responsibilities shall be as follows:

Budget Finance Committee

- Participate in town budget hearings with Board of Finance.
- Have member act as liaison to Board of Finance.
- Provide ongoing monitor/review of current year's budget and expenses.
- Review financial analyses and recommendations, as needed, for Board decisions.
- Provide representation on business related town committees (i.e., purchasing, insurance).
- Review policies related to series 3000 business.

Policy Committee

- Review recommended policies/regulations consistent with policies of the Board of Education.
- Review policies to ensure consistency with federal and state laws.
- Recommend areas for which Board of Education should consider adopting policies.

Curriculum Committee

- Work with administration to establish a curriculum review schedule and monitor the progress of curriculum implementation
- Review new curricula proposed by Colchester educator curriculum committees assembled by administration
- Make recommendations to the full Board of Education for the adoption of curricula and the Programs of Study
- Review and develop policies related to curriculum as found in series 5000 Students and 6000 Instruction

Communications Committee

- Communicate relevant information to stakeholders in Colchester Public Schools and the Colchester community to ensure that our school district provides information about, and celebrates the work of, the school community.
- Increase opportunities for communication between the Board of Education and other municipal boards, commissions, and committees.

Facilities Committee

- Develop Planned and Cycled Maintenance 10-year plan for operational improvements and oversee implementation.
- Make recommendations to the Board on the effective utilization of all buildings and grounds to address educational programming, school safety and school security.
- Receive periodic reports from the Superintendent and the District Facilities Director regarding maintenance projects, facilities project progress and other facilities-related matters.
- Invite District and Town employees and officials as appropriate to committee and Board meetings to report on or discuss facilities-related matters.

The list of responsibilities is intended to provide a sampling or framework of responsibilities for which each committee is held accountable. Additional responsibilities will be assigned by the Board Chair, as needed.

Guidelines of Ad Hoc Committees

The Chair of the Board of Education shall identify the need for an ad hoc committee. An ad hoc committee shall be convened to accomplish a specific task and typically will be a short-term, non-permanent body.

The Board of Education as a result of a two-thirds vote shall establish the committee charge, duties and membership. The Chair of the Board of Education shall be an ex officio member of the committee. The Board of Education shall determine the specific task required and duties of the committee and a general timeline at the time of appointment.
Committee members shall select their own chairman. The Chair of the Board of Education shall fill any vacancies.

The committee shall be considered dissolved when its written final report has been made to the Board of Education. The committee shall act in an advisory capacity only. Its recommendations shall be presented to the Board but are not considered binding.

Ad Hoc committees shall have access to the press only through the Superintendent of Schools and/or the chairperson of the committee.
The Committee may determine:

- how it wants to organize itself.
- how often to meet.
- what records to keep in addition to minutes of meetings.

- whether to have a subcommittee or study group.
- what information or additional participation it shall need and direct such requests to the Superintendent of School side signee.

Meetings should be held in accordance with state and federal regulations. Minutes shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Board and kept on file in the Superintendent's office and available during business hours.

Board Representatives

Appointments to Town Boards, Committees and/or Commissions

The Chairperson may appoint liaisons of the Board of Education to Town Boards, Committees, Commissions, or Organizations. Such appointments shall be for two years or until the discharge of the assigned function of said Board, Committee, Commission, or Organization.

Board Consultants

The Colchester Board of Education may from time to time engage qualified professional services. The kinds of assistance sought from consultants may include, but will not necessarily be limited to the following:

1. Conducting fact-finding studies, surveys, and research;
2. Providing counsel or services having special expertise;
3. Assisting the Board in developing policy and program recommendations.

Before engaging a consultant, the Board may require submission of a written proposal which can be incorporated into a contract or purchase order. Proposals will detail:

1. The specific objectives to be accomplished by the consultant;
2. The specific tasks to be performed;
3. The procedures to be used in carrying out the tasks;
4. The target dates for completion of tasks;
5. The method to be used to report results to the Board and/or to deliver any "product" (e.g., long-range plans, codified policy manual, etc.) to the Board; and
6. Costs.

Student Members of the Board of Education

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of maintaining open communications with all of its constituents, including the students that it serves. The Board also recognizes the need to hear students' opinions and students' concerns on a regular and ongoing basis on issues of mutual concern. Although students may not always agree with the decisions of the Board, they must feel assured that their voices are heard and concerns are considered.

To provide a direct line of communication between the Board and students, the Board of Education shall seat one student from the Bacon Academy Senior class and one student from the Bacon Academy Junior class to serve as non-voting Student Members to the Board of Education.

The responsibilities of each Student Member to the Board are as follows:

1. To review public Board meeting materials that are delivered to all members prior to all regular meetings;
2. To attend all open sessions of all regular meetings of the Board of Education (The Student Member shall neither attend nor participate in executive sessions, negotiation sessions, or other sessions for which the Board can exclude members of the public);
3. During such meetings, to contribute to the discussion of items of the agenda, as appropriate and as requested by Board members (Student Members may neither make motions nor vote on motions);
4. To communicate information and opinions from students in all schools to the Board and from the Board to those students;
5. Once a Board decision is made, to assist (as appropriate) in informing students about the decision and in its successful implementation in the schools; and

The responsibilities of the Board to each Student Member are as follows:

1. To meet with the Student Members and the advisor to the Student Council at the beginning of the school year to discuss responsibilities and participation;
2. To distribute public Board meeting packets and other information to each Student Member in the same manner as all Board members;
3. To permit the Senior Student Member to sit at the Board table with all members during public sessions; and
4. To allow the Student Member to participate in Board discussions in public session and to ask questions of those presenting to the Board, to the same extent as all members. The

Student Member shall neither attend nor participate in executive sessions, negotiation sessions, or other sessions for which the Board can exclude members of the public.

Qualifications for Student Members

1. Membership in the Student Council; and
2. Eligibility for participation in co-curricular activities (eligibility requirements as set by the administration).

Selection Procedure for Student Members

1. The members of the Bacon Academy Student Council shall vote to elect the Student Member(s) from the Student Council no later than the end of the previous school year, in accordance with election procedures established by the Student Council.
2. One Student Member shall be from the Junior class and one shall be from the Senior class. Election shall be for a two-year term, and when the Student Member for the Junior class continues to serve the following year as the Student Member from the Senior Class, the Student Council shall elect only one Student Member from the then-sophomore class to serve the following year as the Junior class Student Member.

Recall / Removal

1. Any Student Member who is removed from the Student Council shall be automatically removed as a Student Member to the Board.
2. Student Member(s) may be also removed by an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the Board of Education.
3. In the event either Student Member misses more than two meetings of the Board of Education in one academic year (September through June), the Board Chair shall meet with such Student Member and discuss the circumstances surrounding such absences. Following this meeting, at the discretion of the Board Chair, the Board Chair may call for a vote to remove the Student Member due to poor attendance.

4. In the event of a recall or removal, another Student Council member from the same class as the departing Student Member shall be seated.

Members

Board of Education authority as the duly constituted governing body of the school district can be translated into action only through motions adopted or passed at official meetings of the Board of Education or by Board of Education members acting with special responsibility delegated by the Board of Education. The Board of Education as a body exists only at Board of Education meetings, and members' authority exists only at Board of Education meetings or when discharging a Board of Education assignment.

Filling Vacancies on the Board

1. In the event of a vacancy on the Colchester Board of Education, the remaining members of the Board within 60 days of the start of such vacancy, shall appoint by majority vote a Successor Member (the "Successor Member") to membership on that board. The Successor Member shall be a member of the same political party as the prior member, or if the prior member was not affiliated with any political party, then such Successor Member shall also not be affiliated with any political party. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the prior member has changed political parties or has become unaffiliated subsequent to being elected, then the Successor Member shall be a member of the prior member's political party (or unaffiliated, if applicable) at the time such prior member was elected. The Successor Member shall hold such membership until the next Municipal Election at which time a successor shall be elected to serve the remainder of the unexpired term of the prior member if applicable.
2. A member resigning from the Board should present, written letter of resignation to the Board Chair. Having accepted a letter of resignation, or having become aware of a vacancy created by means other than the resignation of a Board member, the Board will schedule the election of a replacement at the next regular Board meeting or at a special meeting convened for such purpose.
3. The Superintendent will advertise the vacancy and application process in the local newspaper. All applications will be submitted to the Colchester Board of Education Office addressed to the Board Chair.
4. Said election, made by the majority of the Board and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, shall be in effect until the next regular Town election, at which a successor shall be elected for the unexpired portion of the term. The official ballot shall specify the vacancy to be filled.

Resignation / Removal from Office / Censure

Removal from Office

Any officer of the Board may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the whole Board.

Resignation

If a Board member decides to terminate service, the Board requests as early as possible notification of intent to resign. When a member of a Board of Education shall cease to be a bonafide resident of the Town of Colchester, membership on the Board shall immediately cease.

Censure

The Board may vote to censure or reprimand a member by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the whole Board.

Orientation

The Board of Education and the administrative staff shall assist each new Board member-elect to become familiar with and to understand the Board of Education's functions, policies, procedures, and operation of the school district before the member takes office. The following methods shall be employed:

1. The incoming member(s) shall be given selected materials on the function of the Board of Education and the school district.
2. The incoming member(s) shall be invited to attend Board meetings and functions and to participate in its discussions.
3. The Superintendent shall arrange a meeting of the Board, the Superintendent and the new member(s) with department heads and administrators for the purpose of answering questions and acquainting the member(s) with the district.
4. The incoming member(s) shall be provided with a copy of the Board's policies and bylaws, administrative regulations and copies of pertinent materials developed by the

State School Board Association, Board minutes for the past year and other helpful information explaining the Board's roles and responsibilities.

5. The Board Chairperson or designee shall arrange a meeting with new Board member(s) for the purpose of explaining and answering questions about Board processes and procedures.
6. The Board Chairperson may request a veteran Board member to mentor a new member.
7. The incoming member(s) may attend, at district expense, workshops for newly elected members as approved by the Board of Education.

Board Member Development

Board members may participate in opportunities for development that may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. In-service activities planned by the Board and by the administration for staff members, as appropriate;
2. Participation in conferences, workshops and conventions held by state and national school boards associations and other educational organizations;
3. Subscriptions to publications addressing Board member concerns.

The Board of Education places a high priority on the importance of a planned and continuing program of in-service education for its members.

To control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Board establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. The Board will decide which conferences, workshops, and conventions appear to be most likely to produce the greatest benefit to the Board and the district;
2. Funds for participation at such conferences, workshops, and conventions appear will be budgeted. The Board will designate which members would be most appropriate to participate at a given event;
3. If authorized to attend, the Board will pay for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred upon submitting documentation; and
4. Board members who participate will be requested to share, by means of written or oral reports, information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

Remuneration

Board of Education members shall receive no compensation for their services.

No member of the Board of Education shall be employed for compensation by the Board of Education of which he/she is a member in any position in the school system. If any member of the Board of Education is employed contrary to the provisions of this bylaw, the office to which he/she was elected or appointed shall become vacant. No provision of this bylaw shall be construed to prohibit any member of the Board of Education from serving as a member of any school building committee established by a town or regional school district to undertake a school building project.

Board Member Protection

The Colchester Public Schools shall maintain adequate insurance to protect the district and its Board of Education against loss because of fire, damage to school property, loss to other property, or general liability resulting as a responsibility of the school district, and save harmless its Board and staff while acting in behalf of the school district.

Conflict of Interest

The Board desires its members not only to adhere to all laws regarding conflict of interest but to be continually aware of situations which have the appearance of conflict of interest and to avoid actions that might embarrass themselves or the Board.

Two areas of Board operations must be guarded with particular care in order that there be no real or seeming conflict of interest. These are purchasing and hiring of new personnel. Therefore:

1. No member of the Board shall have any direct pecuniary interest in a contract with the school district, nor shall he/she furnish directly any labor, equipment, or supplies to the district. It is not the intent of this bylaw to prevent the district from contracting with corporations or businesses because a Board member is an employee of the firm. However, in such instances, the member may be expected to declare his/her association with the firm and will refrain from debating or voting on the question.
2. If a member of the immediate family of a board member-specifically parent/guardian, spouse, child, or grandchild -- is being considered for employment, that member shall disqualify him/herself from participation in discussion or vote.

3. The Board shall not give preferential treatment to companies in which town officials or paid town employees, have a major financial interest or to companies by which they are employed.
4. No Board member shall use his or her position to influence an employment or contractual decision other than those routinely made by the Board itself.

Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics is based upon "Standards of Leadership for Members of Boards of Education" recommended by the CABE Board of Directors in 1977:

It is the policy of the Colchester Board of Education that the Board members will:

1. Be a staunch advocate of high-quality, free public education for all Connecticut children and will think of "children first."
2. As agents of the state, uphold and enforce all laws, rules, regulations, and court orders pertaining to public schools and will strive to bring any needed change only through legal and ethical procedures.
3. Strive to help create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
4. Work unremittingly to help the community understand the importance of proper support for public education, whether it be in providing adequate finance, optimum facilities, staffing and resources, or better educational programs for children.
5. Join with staff, community, and students in becoming fully informed about the nature, value, and direction of contemporary education in our society.
6. Attempt to confine Board action to policy-making, planning and appraisal, and will help to frame policies and plans only after the Board has consulted those who will be affected by its actions.
7. Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with fellow Board members in meeting. Will respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority-rule.
8. Acknowledge that the Board represents the entire school community, and will refuse to surrender independent judgment to special interests or partisan political groups.
9. Hold confidential all matters pertaining to schools, which, if disclosed, might needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
10. Insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.

11. Support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties. I will strive to ensure that all personnel have not only the requisite responsibilities, but the necessary authority to perform effectively.

Code of Conduct

The success of every school system depends on an effective working relationship between the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools and the community at large. This code incorporates those standards and responsibilities most critical to productive Board, Superintendent and community relations.

1. Board members and the Superintendent ensure the opportunity for high quality education for every student and make the well-being of students the fundamental goal of all decision-making and actions.
2. Board members and the Superintendent are staunch advocates of high quality free public education for all Connecticut children and will work together to help create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, physical condition or social standing.
3. Board members and the Superintendent will help the community to understand the importance of proper support for public education.
4. Board members and the Superintendent recognize that clear and appropriate communications are key to the successful operation of the school district and that they must ensure that the community remains fully informed on school-related matters. In addition, they will work to help the community to understand the importance of proper support for public education.
5. Board members and the Superintendent will always carry out their respective roles with the highest levels of professionalism, honesty and integrity.
6. The Superintendent and Board members recognize that the Superintendent serves as the Board of Education's agent and will, in that role, faithfully apply the policies and contracts adopted by the Board. Board members recognize that their responsibility is not to "run the schools," but to see that they are well-run through effective policies.
7. Board members adhere to the principle that they shall confine the Board's role to policy-making, planning and appraisal while the Superintendent shall implement the Board's policies.
8. Board members and The Superintendent both recognize that they serve as a part of an educational team with mutual respect, trust, civility and regard for each other's respective roles and responsibilities.

9. Board members and The Superintendent consider and decide all issues fairly and without bias.
10. Board members recognize that their responsibility is not to "run the schools" through administration, but together with fellow Board members, to see that they are well run through effective policies.
11. Board members recognize that authority rests only with the whole Board assembled in public meeting, and will make no personal promises or take any private action which may compromise the Board.
12. Board members will refer all complaints through the proper "chain of command" within the system, and will act on such complaints at public meetings only when administrative solutions fail.

Methods of Operation

The Colchester Board of Education shall concern itself only with broad questions of policy and not with administrative details. The Board shall rely upon the Superintendent of Schools to recommend policies for adoption and to administer policies enacted by the Board. Such policies shall be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the Superintendent in meeting a number of problems and jobs. Application of such policies to individual problems and jobs is an administrative function to be performed by the Superintendent.

Development, Distribution, and Maintenance of Manual of Policies, Regulations, Bylaws

Policy Dissemination

The Superintendent of Schools is directed to preserve and make accessible the policies adopted by the Colchester Board of Education and the administrative rules and regulations needed to put them into effect.

The Superintendent shall establish and maintain an orderly plan for making pertinent policies of the Board known to employees and others affected by them.

Manual Maintenance/Updating

The Board of Education shall periodically review and update its policies and bylaws.

Policies

Introduction

The Colchester Board of Education considers policy development one of its chief functions. Through the development and adoption of written policies, the Board shall exercise its leadership in the operation of the school system. Within the context of current law, the District shall be guided by Board-adopted written policies that are given appropriate distribution and are accessible to staff members, parents, students, and community residents.

Changes in needs, conditions, purposes, and objectives will require revisions, deletions, and additions to the policies of present and future Boards. Policy development is therefore an ongoing process.

Board policies are effective upon Board adoption or at a future date designated by the Board at the time of adoption.

Adoption and/or Amendment of Board of Education Policies

1. Proposals to amend existing policies or adopt new policies shall be made to the Policy Committee and may be based on one or more of the following:

    a. Suggestions and requests from Board members;
    b. Recommendations from the Superintendent of Schools;
    c. Statutory or legal requirements;
    d. Citizen input.

    The Superintendent or designee shall reduce proposals into an acceptable written format for further deliberation and/or action by the Policy Committee. The Superintendent, as the policy draft writer for the Board, shall seek the advice of counsel when, in the Superintendent's opinion or the Board's, there may be a question of legality or proper legal procedure in the development of a proposed policy.
2. The Policy Committee shall present a new or amended policy, together with its recommendations, to the entire Board at a regular Board meeting (the “First Meeting”). No action shall be taken at this First Meeting.
3. The Board may act on a proposed new or amended policy at any regular meeting subsequent to the First Meeting, at which time amendments to the policy proposal may also be made. The proposed policy, as amended (if applicable), may be approved at this

second meeting if the changes are not a departure from the essence of the policy proposal; if the proposed changes are major, the policy should be brought back for a third review at a subsequent regular Board meeting, with a further recommendation from the Board's policy committee.

4. New or revised policies that are required pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes or State Board of Education Regulations may be brought to the Board by the Superintendent without first being reviewed by the Policy Committee and may be approved at the First Meeting.

Formal adoption of policies and/or amendments of policies shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting. Only those written statements so adopted and recorded shall be regarded as official policies.

Non-Substantive Revisions to Existing Policies

Revisions to existing policies to correct typographical errors and/or other non-substantive matters may be made by the Superintendent without Board approval, provided the Superintendent provides written notification to the Board through the inclusion of a redlined copy in the Information Items section of the Board's Agenda for the following meeting.

Formulation, Adoption, and Amendment of Administrative Regulations

Formulation of Administrative Regulations

The Board of Education shall delegate to the Superintendent of Schools the function of recommending required actions and designating the detailed arrangements under which the schools will be operated. These rules and these detailed arrangements shall constitute the administrative regulations governing the schools.

Adoption of Administrative Regulations

Administrative regulations are effective upon approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

Suspension of Policies, Bylaws, Regulations

Policies and bylaws of the Board of Education shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time upon a majority vote of the full membership of the Board, at a meeting in the call for which the proposed suspension has been described in writing or upon a two-thirds vote of the full Board when no written notice has been given.

Meetings

Members of the Board of Education act officially only at regular or special meetings of the Board at which a quorum (four members) shall be present. Board members have no authority except at Board meetings or when discharging an assignment made by the Board.

Board decisions are not made outside of Board meetings. Board meetings are held for the purpose of deliberation and group decisions. Outside the Board meeting, a member is a private citizen who cannot properly make any official statement for the Board or make any promise or commitment with respect to his/her own decision in the Board meeting.

Time, Place, Notification for Meetings

Organizational Meeting

The Board of Education shall conduct its organizational meeting at its first meeting following Board elections, and at this meeting Board officers shall be elected – Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. The organizational meeting shall be called to order by the Superintendent of Schools who will preside until a new Chairperson is chosen by a majority vote of the Board.

Election of officers and the vote of each member shall be made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Upon his/her election the Chairperson shall assume the chair and proceed with the election of the Board Vice Chairman and Secretary.

Vacant Office Position(s)

If the position of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Secretary becomes vacant between organizational meetings, the Board of Education member to fill the position shall be elected by the Board at its next regular meeting.

Regular Meetings

The Board of Education will meet the second Tuesday of each month unless otherwise ordered by the Board.

The Board of Education shall file, not later than December 1st of each year, with the Town Clerk, a schedule of all the regular meetings of the Board of Education for the ensuing year. No regular meeting shall be held sooner than thirty (30) days after such filing.

All regular meetings shall be open to the public and the press. Changes of regular meetings from posted dates shall be filed with the Town Clerk and publicized in accordance with requirements of the Freedom of Information Commission. Only items on the regular meeting agenda may be taken up by the Board unless a two-thirds vote of the Board approves additions to a regular meeting agenda.

Special Meetings

Special meetings shall be called by the Board Chairperson whenever he/she deems it necessary, or upon written request of one-third of the members of the Board. The notice of such meeting shall state the special matter or matters to be considered. At such meetings only the business for which the meeting was called shall be in order.

Notice of all special meetings of the Board of Education and changes in the schedule previously filed shall be given to the Town clerk not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of such meeting; however, in case of emergency, the twenty-four hour notice may be waived. In the event of such emergency meeting, a copy of the minutes of such emergency meeting shall be filed with the Town Clerk not later than seventy-two (72) hours following the meeting. The special meeting shall also be posted on the District's website.

In determining the time a notice must be filed, Saturdays, Sundays, legal holiday, and any other day when the Town Clerk's office is closed shall be excluded.

Only business identified on the published agenda of a special meeting shall be discussed or transacted by the Board at such special meeting.

Adjourned Meetings

The Board may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment by vote of a majority of the members in attendance at the meeting. A copy of the

order of adjournment shall be posted within twenty—four (24) hours of the adjournment on or near the door of the place where the meeting was held.

Notice of Meetings

The agenda for each regular and special meeting shall be posted in the office of the Town Clerk and the office of the Colchester Public Schools located in the Town Hall at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting. The agenda of emergency meetings shall be posted in said location as far prior to the meetings as is practical.

Meeting agendas will be posted on the district website (www.colchesterct.org) and mailed to persons filing a written request renewable in January of each year. The Board of Education may charge a fee for these mailed notices based upon cost of the service, as provided by law and policy.

Board of Education Work Sessions

The Board may schedule special meetings for the purpose of conducting work sessions to provide its members with opportunities for planning and thoughtful discussion.

Topics for discussion and study will be announced consistent with special meeting notification. Work sessions will be conducted in accordance with the state law on public meetings.

Public and Executive Sessions

Public Meetings

All meetings of the Board of Education shall be open to the public with the exception of executive sessions. (cf. 9320 - Meetings)

Executive Sessions

The public may be excluded from meetings of the Board of Education which are declared to be executive sessions. Executive sessions may be held upon a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting taken in the public portion of the meeting and shall be held for only one or more of the following reasons, which shall be stated in the motion, and may not be held for any other reason:

1. Discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee, unless such individual request such discussion be held at an open meeting.
2. Strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation.
3. Matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security.
4. Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.
5. Discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein described in subsection (b) of section 1-19 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Non-Meeting for the Purpose of Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is excluded from the definition of a "meeting" under The Freedom of Information Act. Consequently, collective bargaining sessions are not held in an executive session, but rather are held outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act, as a "non-meeting." Current legal interpretation is that all collective bargaining matters, whether negotiations, grievance hearings, or binding arbitration proceedings can properly be considered to fall outside the scope of The Freedom of Information Act. Moreover, the FOIA does permit executive session discussion of documents related to "strategy or negotiations related to collective bargaining."

Meeting Conduct

Meeting Conduct

1. Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the Chairperson in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the adopted bylaws of the Board.
2. All Board meetings shall commence at, or as close as practicable to, the stated Time, provided there is a quorum.

3. All regular and special Board meetings shall be guided by an agenda which will have been prepared and delivered in advance to all Board members and other designated persons.
4. The Board of Education may recess any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place.
5. Protocol for meetings of the Board of Education follows parliamentary rules and procedures as outlined by Robert's Rules of Order.

Procedures for Electronic Participation

1. Board members may participate in meetings electronically (e.g., conference call, video conferencing, etc.) under the conditions set forth herein. When such conditions are met, any Board member participating telephonically shall be counted for the purpose of constituting a quorum. Conditions for participation are as follows:
    a. Any Board member participating electronically must identify themselves during roll call and again prior to their first comments or questions. Board members are encouraged to identify themselves prior to subsequent comments or questions. Board members shall also identify themselves as part of any Board voting.
    b. Any physical or demonstrable material that is used in the course of the proceedings must be present in the place where the public is located; and
    c. All those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify all participants in the proceeding, including their individual remarks and votes.
2. When a Board member is participating in a meeting electronically, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a Board member participating telephonically has adequate opportunity to express himself/herself in Board discussion, including the opportunity to take the floor and make motions.

Citizens' Comments

1. The Board may permit any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction during the portion of any Board meetings so designated for such purpose. Citizens' Comments shall be subject to the following guidelines:
    a. Three (3) minutes will be allotted to each speaker on each subject matter, and a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes will be allotted to each subject matter. The

Board may decide by a majority vote to extend the 15 minutes of time allotted to each subject matter, but in no event shall the total time allotted to each subject matter exceed 30 minutes. The 3 minutes of time allotted to each speaker cannot be extended. Time not used by a speaker cannot be retained for later use by that speaker and cannot be allotted to another speaker. Speakers may provide written testimony or handouts to the Board, which will become part of the public meeting record. Speakers are not permitted to make presentations to the Board using PowerPoint, overhead projectors, or other electronic/digital programs.

b. A Board of Education member shall be appointed by the Chairperson to act as timekeeper for the meeting, if deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

c. All speakers must identify themselves by name and address.

d. The Board will not respond to comments made during Citizens' Comments, with the exception that the Chairperson only may respond if, in the discretion of the Chairperson, such comments require an immediate response.

e. The Board may not limit the subject of a citizen's comments, except that formal charges or formal complaints must be initiated in writing only in accordance with Policy 1312P General Complaint Procedures. Reasonable standards for decorum are expected.

f. No inappropriate or disrespectful conduct or personal attacks shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in such conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the Chairperson, of that person's privilege of address. The Chairperson may also ask such person to leave the meeting.

g. If a meeting of the Board of Education is interrupted by disturbances or inappropriate or disrespectful conduct and order cannot be restored, the Chairperson may order the room cleared and then continue with the meeting. Members of the press and members of the public not participating in such disturbance and/or not participating in such inappropriate or disrespectful conduct may be allowed to remain.

Actions by the Board

No action will be taken at a special meeting unless the subject acted upon was listed in the agenda published for that meeting. Additions may be made to the agenda at a regular meeting for which action may be considered.

All motions and each member's vote taken by the Board shall be identified clearly in minutes of the Board meeting as provided in Bylaw 9326: Minutes.

Quorum

A majority of the members of the Board of Education (four members) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Parliamentary Procedure

Unless otherwise provided in the bylaws of the Board of Education, the Board shall conduct all its meetings in accord with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Minutes/Taping/Broadcasting

All formal actions, motions, and each member's vote of the Board of Education shall be recorded in the minute book of the Board located in the Town Clerk's office. The minute book shall be kept on file as a permanent official record of all Board action and shall be open to public inspection at all reasonable times. The office of the Town Clerk and the Colchester Public Schools office shall each maintain a record of the minutes.

Any public meeting of the Board of Education may be photographed, broadcast, or recorded for broadcast.

Board minutes shall be available in the unapproved form, within seven (7) days of a Board meeting excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; a written record of Board votes shall be available for public inspection in the Town Clerk's office within 48 hours of a Board meeting excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. In determining the time herein, any day on which the Board office is closed shall also be excluded.

Copies of the minutes of a meeting shall be sent to all members of the Board before the meeting at which they are to be approved. Permanent minutes shall be signed by the Board Clerk.

Board/School District Records and Document FOIA

The Board of Education recognizes that an informed community is vital to the Colchester Public Schools.

In accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Connecticut General Statute Section 1-200 et seq., members of the public are entitled to inspect public records and

documents (except those exempt from public disclosure) promptly during regular business hours. Members of the public are also entitled to receive copies of such records promptly upon request. The FOIA provides that the Board may charge members of the public $.50 per page for such copies and that the Board may require advance payment when such authorized charges exceed $10.00.

An individual may use a "hand-held" scanner* to copy a public record. The Board establishes a fee structure not to exceed twenty dollars ($20) for an individual to pay each time the individual copies records at the Board offices with a handheld scanner.

*A hand-held scanner is defined by C.G.S. 1-212(g) as a battery-operated electronic scanning device the use of which (1) leaves no mark or impression on the public record, and (2) does not unreasonably interfere with the operation of the public agency.

The Board considers the use of a "Smartphone" as analogous to a hand-held scanner and therefore, subject to a twenty dollar ($20) flat fee.

School Board Legislative Program

The Colchester School District operates within a complex framework of federal, state, and local laws and regulations. To be effective, the Board and its members must maintain an awareness of this framework and, when appropriate, provide input into the legislative and regulatory processes.

Board members shall maintain an awareness of current and proposed federal, state, and local laws and regulations through whatever means each member deems appropriate, including review of periodicals, publications, and other informational materials, attendance at legislative hearings, or participation in conferences and workshops. Board members may provide input and commentary to appropriate authorities on any legislative and regulatory matter, provided each such member indicates that the input or commentary is being provided as an individual Board member and not as the position of the Board of Education.

The Board of Education may, by a motion approved by a majority of its members at a regular or special meeting, adopt a District-wide position on any legislative or regulatory matter. Once adopted, the Board Chairperson shall make such position known to all authorities and officials having jurisdiction on such matters and, when appropriate, shall publicize such position in the community. Only the Board Chairperson, or his or her designee, is authorized to provide written or oral testimony on the District’s position in any public meeting or proceeding.

The Superintendent of Schools, as agent of the Board of Education, may provide written or oral testimony on any District-wide position adopted in accordance with this policy. In the event the Board has not adopted a District-wide position on a particular issue, the Superintendent of Schools shall make clear that any opinion he/she may express on such issue, in whatever forum, is a personal opinion and not that of the Board and/or the District.

Policy Review

The Board shall periodically evaluate the policies it has formulated. It shall evaluate how the policies have been carried out by the district employees. It shall rely on the district employees, parents, students, and the community to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the policies which it has adopted. The Board shall also make appropriate changes to its policy to reflect changes in state and federal laws and regulations and changes in the attitudes of the Board, staff, parents, students and the community.

Facilities Review

The Board shall review and determine the facilities requirements of the district each year as part of the yearly budget process. If action is needed by the Boards of Finance and Selectman in order to implement the recommendations being made by the Board of Education, then the Board shall also make such recommendations to those Boards.

Acronyms

CABE	Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
CAPSS	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
CAS	Connecticut Association of Schools
CEA	Connecticut Education Association
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
CIAC	Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
CMT	Connecticut Mastery Test
DRG	District Reference Group
DSAP	Durational Shortage Area Permit
ECS	Educational Cost Sharing
ELL	English Language Learners
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOIC	Freedom of Information Commission
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
NCEP	Net Current Expenditures per Pupil
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NESDEC	New England School Development Council
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards
NSBA	National School Board Association
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
PPT	Planning and Placement Team
RESC	Regional Educational Service Center
RTI	Response to Intervention
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SBA	Smarter Balanced Assessment
SRBI	Scientific Research-Based Intervention
TEAM	Teacher Education and Mentoring Program
TRB	Teacher Retirement Board

Schools and Departments

Board of Education Central Office
127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-7267
Superintendent: (860) 537-7208

Pupil Services and Special Education
380 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-3103

Facilities Department
367 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-2296

Technology Services
315 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-8324

Colchester Elementary School
315 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-0717

Jack Jackter Intermediate School
215 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-9421

William J. Johnston Middle School
360 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-2313

Bacon Academy
611 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415
Main Telephone: (860) 537-2378

Resources

Robert's Rules of Order, 11th Edition

A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law, Thomas B. Mooney, 8th Edition

See You in Court - the Annals of the Nutmeg Board of Education, Thomas B. Mooney
"CABE/CAPSS Governance Statement," February 2004

"School Boards and Student Achievement," Iowa Association of School Boards "The Lighthouse Inquiry," Iowa Association of School Boards

Becoming a Better Board Member, National Association of School Boards

www.cabe.org

www.nsba.org

www.sde.ct.gov